were allowed to rob the native population but could not take their loot back to Moscow. When a governor was recalled by the Tsar, his train would be stopped and searched at the Urals and a large part of his gold and precious furs taken for the Tsar's treasury.

In my time, Siberia had a dozen cities of fifty thousand or more inhabitants, with a municipal water supply, electricity, paved streets, high schools, and a municipal theater—in short, everything to be found in provincial cities of European Russia. But northern Siberia remained untouched, with small villages and hamlets far apart from one another, surrounded by intractable forests.

Hundreds of inhabited points were marked on Siberia's maps. Official records showed either the population of these villages in 1897, the year of the first nationwide census, or the number of chimneys. Towns were reported with two to three chimneys, and others with one chimney or no chimney at all—camps of igloos in the Arctic region, abandoned post stations, and villages that had been planned in the eighteenth century but never built.

The revolution of 1905 had brought a new wave of settlers to Siberia—political exiles. They were distinctly different from the outlaws and political rebels taken to Siberia in the nineteenth century.

Before 1905 almost all the political prisoners deported to Siberia were intellectuals—the flow of convicts discharged by the prisons of European Russia included only a few "politicals," and they were easily absorbed by the local communities as village clerks or accountants of commercial firms. Later they moved to cities where they could work as teachers, lawyers, physicians, journalists, bank officials, and the like. They formed the nucleus of the Siberian intelligentsia.

In contrast, the new political exiles, participants in the mass rebellion in 1905, included former sailors and soldiers, workers and peasants, and semi-intellectuals. They were brought by the carload and scattered among remote hamlets, and most of them had neither money nor skill that could be used in the new environment. A few became farmhands, but others lacked the physical strength and endurance for manual work.

The Siberian peasants looked on them with grim contempt. They respected the politicals who were useful to the community, but a man had to wait a long time for an opportunity to prove his usefulness to a Siberian hamlet. In large villages and towns an exile had some chance to find work, but in the wilderness he was practically doomed. Furthermore, many found the transition from the prison routine to half-freedom in a new grim and austere environment difficult and painful. Tragic casualties, accidents and suicides, a few weeks after release from prison were not rare.

The dream of the political exiles was to be settled somewhere along